

Health and Culture

Enhancing mental health through the arts



Arts on Prescription in the Baltic Sea Region

Why invest in Arts on Prescription?

Globally, mental health issues affect approximately 1 billion people, placing increased pressure on already burdened healthcare systems. Consequently, there are not enough mental healthcare specialists to meet the growing demand for mental health services. Arts on Prescription (AoP) offers a promising and innovative solution for promoting mental wellbeing. Evidence clearly shows that the arts can significantly enhance mental health and foster social connections.

Arts on Prescription is a strategic investment:

- reduces the burden on healthcare by reducing the frequency of GP visits
- addresses social isolation through community-based creative activities
- promotes cross-sector collaboration and improving resilient communities
- is often low risk with high social and health returns on investment

“

I'm convinced that culture for health interventions will be part of health systems throughout the future. The question is how fast do we want this future to be?

Nils Fietje, Research officer, WHO

Health and Culture

Enhancing mental health through the arts



Arts on Prescription in the Baltic Sea Region

What is Arts on Prescription?

Arts on Prescription (AoP) is a community-based programme for people with or at risk of developing mental health issues. It offers group-based culture and arts activities to promote mental health and social belonging.

Arts on Prescription programmes can:

- improve participants' mental, physical, and social health, leading to increased energy levels, reduced stress, and enhanced self-esteem
- help participants to express themselves creatively, which can have a therapeutic effect and promote mental health
- provide a safe and supportive environment where participants can build strong social connections

“ Scientific research is increasingly demonstrating that the arts are a fundamental health behaviour, just like physical activity, diet and sleep [...] if we want to live happier and healthier lives, engaging in the arts is an evidence-based way of achieving this aim.

Professor Daisy Fancourt, Head of the Social Biobehavioural Research Group